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[I am Navy Medicine: Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Wayne Papalski](#)

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I provide continuous advanced life support care to the Pacific Northwest.

Editor's Note: HM1(NAC/PJ/EXW/SW/AW) Wayne Papalski was recently named 2015 Armed Services YMCA Angel of the Battlefield and [Naval Hospital Oak Harbor's Sailor of the Year](#). He currently serves as the leading search and rescue (SAR) corpsman for [Naval Air Station Whidbey Island Search and Rescue Unit](#). He is a national registry paramedic, board of critical care flight

paramedic and tactical paramedic and finishing his Bachelors of Science in Paramedicine.



Each mission is more challenging than the last. I have to constantly invent new methods of extraction and care.

I enlisted in the Navy after graduating from Bayonne High School in Newark, New Jersey in 2004.

I joined the Navy because I was inspired by the tireless effort of the emergency responders who flooded into New York after 911. I watched the Twin Towers fall from the roof of my high school and the devastating aftermath that followed. I was impressed by the people who worked day and night, trying to save lives with complete disregard for their own safety and well-being. The memory has steered every decision I have made throughout countless rescue missions.

My career has taken me all over the world. I have deployed in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom, and Joint Special Operations for Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force – Air, completing countless casualty evacuations and medical evacuations (MEDEVACS), transporting very injured and sick patients.

My most exciting assignment is my current duty. As one of two SAR corpsmen, I provide continuous advanced life support care to the Pacific Northwest. We average 40-50 missions a year supporting overwater, inland and mountain SAR as well as MEDEVACs. There are many challenges because of the rugged terrain of the Cascade and Olympic Mountain ranges, coupled with severe and quickly-changing weather, and the unpredictable nature of the trauma and medical calls we receive. Each mission is more challenging than the last. I have to constantly invent new methods of extraction and care.

As a Navy Medicine ambassador, I strive to give my best, supporting our fighting force, their families,

and the civilian population. I teach advanced pre-hospital medicine to junior corpsman, perform challenging SAR missions to rescue hikers with life-threatening injuries and work with public organizations to improve the response time of emergency services in the region.

Everything I do is a direct reflection of the opportunity and experience Navy Medicine has given me and the patients I treat.

My career has been a series of amazing experiences and it continues to get better. To sum up my Navy Medicine career in one sentence; it's been one amazing ride all over the world with ups and downs that keep me coming back for more. I cannot wait to see where it takes me next.

I am HM1(NAC/PJ/EXW/SW/AW) Wayne Papalski. I am Navy Medicine.

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